613 members goes to an outsider and grumbles to him about the
757 family squabbles[1] and quarrels. The outsider then takes the
578 opportunity of using this squabble to introduce his sorcery into
624 the lineage. The Yao greatly fear backbiting because of their dread of sorcery and none dreads it more than a village headman, a warden of a sorority-group,[2] or a person in the position of having to keep a matrilineage or section together. These people are continually adjuring the women under them—*for it is the women who are believed to be the main culprits*—not to fight among themselves; and if they do, not to take their complaints to an outsider but to the senior member of the matrilineage. The significance of this in relation to lineage unity is plain enough.

613 Apart from sorcery, strained relationships between members of
578 a matrilineage are believed to be dangerous for other reasons.
643 Malice may adversely affect people who are in mystically danger-
224 ous states. The most common of these states is pregnancy. If a woman has a quarrel with a matrilineage member while she is pregnant she is likely to have a difficult labour. The Yao say 'the womb has heard these bad words'. Another situation where malice or quarrelling will cause difficulties is in hunting. The luck of the chase is capricious and malice may easily bring bad fortune to an otherwise good hunter. For example, a successful hunter once gave each of his two sisters a piece of venison. Each complained that the other had been given the larger piece and quarrelled vehemently about it for weeks. The hunter now found that no game fell into his traps. He went to a diviner who indicated the quarrel of the sisters as the cause of his failure and told the hunter to get them to 'blow water' (*hupenya*). He did this; good relationships were restored and his traps were filled once more.

613 These deleterious effects, like the curse, are connected in some
578 way with the ancestor spirits. This is sometimes expressed quite
769 clearly when a person is called upon to 'blow water'. A
755 mother who wishes to revoke a curse, a woman who wishes to recant her malice towards her matrilineal relative who is suffering in childbirth, or a man whose sister's son is ill supposedly because

[1] This is called *mineti*, which I have translated as 'backbiting'. This idea is extremely important, as we shall see later.

[2] i.e. those men who are responsible for their sisters and their descendants. See p. 145 ff.

S-Grammar D-6 Gen. (1918) 1922 FFT Tan FFT

Some said *dhoro*, at intervals swaying their bodies from side to side and clapping their hands. Sometimes these ordered all to go and bathe, men and women separately. As they returned from the streams, rain began to fall.

Intercession on behalf of the sick may be made, especially by anyone who is likely to be accused of causing the illness by witchcraft.[1] The man standing with arms outstretched, downwards and a little in front of his body, the hands replete, takes some water in his mouth and discharges it in a stream on the ground, (probably as a sign of purification of his tongue), and then invoking "all the spirits above," asks that they will intercede to restore health to the sick man and bear witness to his own innocence of any wish to do the sick man injury. *Ku-pepa* is the word meaning to offer sacrifice and prayer.

Harvesting and hunting are occasions when sacrifices may be offered. It was formerly the custom for the *chief* to determine the day on which harvesting of millet should begin. On the day appointed, a big drum was beaten in the village and went passed round; then everyone would go down to his garden, gather a head of millet, and bring it back to the village where it was all handed over to the *chief's* household. After drying and thrashing, a little of the grain was laid at the grave of an old *chief* by one of the reigning *chief's* advisers, the remainder being again distributed to all the people gathered together in the village meeting-place, who ate it raw. After this ceremony, harvesting began.

In passing through a millet garden, if a child asks his mother to give him some to eat, she plucks a heads or two and reverently lays one at the foot of a *mawa* tree (or the spirits or at the base of some other tree, if she cannot see a *mawa*, she gives the rest to the child.

When a hunting expedition makes its first killing, part of the flesh of the animal is laid at the base of a tree as a thank offering to the spirits and in anticipation of further favors to be conferred. All such offerings are supposed by the natives to be partaken of by the spirits, though they are well aware that they do not actually diminish in quantity. There is an interesting point in this connection: any man who has acted as *ndolo* (undertaker) to some well-known man may appropriate these offerings. In the case of the hunting offering, he will run round the tree, saying, "I am a hyaena, the spirits will not mind me," and will then take part of the flesh-offering and eat it.

In the same way, a *ndolo* may drink from a grave hour-pot after three days, when the spirits are supposed to have taken what they want.

With the exception of the *mawa* tree above mentioned (*ndawa*, Chin.), and possibly another called *ndo-ngawa* (Chin.), which is never used as firewood and which is supposed to be used by *mungi*, I do not think there are any sacred trees properly so-called. Miss Werner supposes that many of the big trees (*ofwa* a species of *Ficus*) in villages are sacred.[2] The truth is, I believe, simply that a village is made naturally round a big tree which conveniently offers its shade for the village meeting place. The spirits of deceased chiefs may

[1] This paper, p. 307. [2] The natives of British Central Africa, op. cit., p. 68.

Both before and after the introduction of guns, the Tao used spears, lipongo, and bows, ulungu. The spear is a five foot long throwing spear with metal head and wooden shaft. No shield was used. Bows and arrows are made from the wood of the tree or *pimbinguba* tree. The string is made of tendon. A double-bulbed bow called ulungu ua mbawa was sometimes used, but, I believe, originally came from the Anyanja. The arrows, *mpamba*, have a metal arrow-head, and were often poisoned with lembe.

Hunting. The same weapons are used in hunting: the gun, the spear, and the bow and arrow. Smaller bows and arrows made with bamboo or reed shaft are also employed for shooting birds; one of the arrows has a blunt wooden head and serves to stun the bird.

From the Anyanja, the Tao learned the use of a lanyard for spearing the hippopotamus. The lanyard is a heavy spear-head of iron about eighteen inches long, attached to a rope and float. From the Anyanja, also, was learned the use of the falling block with spear for killing hippo.

Elephants are caught in stabbed pits, and the larger antelopes are similarly trapped in pits with the sides sloping towards the bottom, so that as the animal falls lower and lower with exhaustion, it is eventually suffocated.

Small buck are driven by dogs into nets set for long distances in the forest, and then speared or shot. Traps are also set for these smaller antelope and for many other small animals, rodents, etc. Birds are shot or trapped. Bird-lime is also employed. It is prepared from the juices of a number of trees by pounding the vegetable matter in water; the sticky mass so made is applied to sticks or poles. The sticks are placed near drinking places so that the birds alighting to take water become entangled. The poles are affixed to trees so that they appear to be the topmost boughs; this the native does, recognizing the common habit of birds to sit on the very top of trees. The strength of the bird-lime is made according to the size of the bird he wishes to catch.

Fishing. I am not sure how far the Tao is a natural fisherman. Not long ago he used only a many-pronged spear to catch his fish. Since then, he has acquired from the Anyanja the knowledge of making fish-traps and nets, and of using the fish poison. When the Tao came to live and intermarry among the Anyanja, there was one practice of the latter which they would not adopt and which caused a good deal of ill-feeling. A Mang'anja man coming home after fishing always used to prepare the fish and, leaving some ready to cook, he cooked others for his wife, bringing her water at the same time to wash her hands. After eating her own fish, she cooked the rest for her husband. A Tao would never cook for his wife.

Traps. The following is a list of some of the traps I have found in use among the Tao. The sketches will serve to explain their construction better than a lengthy description. Some are very ingeniously made, and must recall similar traps made in other parts of the world.

1. *Lukanji lua kimondo*, a trap for the mouse-rat (Pl. XIX, fig. 1).

2. *Lukanji lua mbindi*, a trap for sharp-toothed gnawing animals, so called from

224 animals, a [illegible] which slides down the string next to the noose so that the upper hand cannot move or pass through the string (Pl. IV, fig. 2; Pl. XXII, fig. 3).

3. *Lukungi lua nsakundi ne shilowa*, a trap for water-rats (Pl. XX, fig. 7).

4. *Lukungi lua nguudi*, a trap for the partridge (Pl. XX, fig. 8).

225 5. *Chijimba cha tjimi*, "the house for birds," also used to trap small animals (Pl. XX, fig. 9).

6. *Lukungi lua kalwi*, a trap for the moth (*of guinea fowl*) (Pl. XX, fig. 4).

7. *Lukungi lua shikwanda*, a trap for the toad (*of the guinea-fowl*); *kwikanda* = to put the foot down, to tread. The string square is about 6 × 6 inches (Pl. XXI, fig. 6).

8. *Limuna*, a trap made of split bamboo. A bird going to pick up the grain is caught by the head when the trap is released by the string which the trapper pulls (Pl. XXI, fig. 5).

9. *Luuna lua tjimi ne ngana*, a bird-trap made of netting on a hinged frame-work, operated by a string (Pl. XXI, fig. 4).

[224] 10. *Lilimo*, a falling stone trap for mice. Rats are said to pull off the trap with their tails and are never caught (Pl. XXI, fig. 1).

10a. The same trap set for catching birds (Pl. XXI, fig. 2).

11. *Mukinjeu* (*ukuka* = hanging loose), a noose for small birds, set on trees (Pl. XX, fig. 1).

[226] 12. *Fwati chinene* was a very simple snare-system consisting of two grains of maize threaded on one end of a piece of string some six inches long, at the other end of which is attached a leaf folded up into the form of a cone. The fowl, enticed by the maize, swallows the two grains and the attached string, so that the cone is drawn over the head; it is then helpless and is easily picked up by the thief, who has only to pull on the string to remove the leaf.

224 13. *Chijuumunda*, a hollow cylinder of wood with cones activated by a wooden spring, for catching rats (Pl. XXI, fig. 3).

14. *Chijuu*, a similar trap made of bark, for mice.

15. *Lilwa*: a plaited bamboo cone into which a rat forces its head to get at the bait, but finds, when it tries to withdraw, that it is caught by sharp-ended pieces of bamboo projecting backwards into the cone (Pl. XX, fig. 6).

227 16. *Mwangwi*, a fish-trap of the same design, from the Anyanja (Pl. XX, fig. 5).

17. *Mwipu*, a fish-trap on the lobster-pot principle, often set in gaps in a fence built across a stream, copied from the Anyanja trap called *nsono* (Pl. XXI, fig. 7).

[227] 18. *Njini*, also I think from the Anyanja, consists of a long basket-work, antheap-like arrangement which is slipped down over a swarm of small fish; the head is introduced through an aperture in one side and the fish removed (Pl. XXI, fig. 8).

Trapping and catching of animals is pursued with great glee by small boys. They make many of the traps, particularly the two kinds of kites, shipole, shipombo, shimeno, and ngulu. Zikwe is set in rat runs and the rats are driven into them (Pl. XII, fig. 4). Digging out rats is a favorite amusement for the boys and brings meat to the pot. May is the best month for this sport. They are adepts at recognizing burrows which have rats inside. Digging is commenced at one entry to the rat warren, the escape holes being closed with tufts of grass. As they get nearer the rat chambers, they smell the earth and so know when they are quite close to the rats. A bunch of grass is then put in this hole, lighted, and kept aglow by blowing on it. One of the rats will try to bolt and is knocked on the head. His head is then squashed to kill him effectually, and the skin of the tail of the first rat is always pulled off for luck, "so that they may catch many." They will try to guess how many there are going to be, "two and two and five and two!" Each rat when caught is buried under some earth, so that the hawks will not swoop down and carry it off. When they have finished one warren, one of the party is appointed to carry all the rats. He ties a string round his waist, and the rats are slipped underneath it and so secured. They then go on to another; the carrier will bear the whole catch for the day and may, before they have finished, have several strings of rats round his body, one above the other.

Digging out moles, ku-bepa ngulu, is another favorite amusement for children; (ku-bepa is to dig up anything like mud which makes a squelching sound). Crabs are never eaten with flour, but always with mealie, the grain beaten, "mabe and kwaru bread!"

Youths and girls fish with a rod, line, wire hook, and worm, ku-kapanga mvuka, to pull up fish. They also catch fish, using the fish poison, mbizi. Birds are killed with a bow and a blunt-pointed wooden arrow.

A small boy, seeing a girl or a younger boy with a nib of maize and wanting it himself, will say, "Let me make a path to the west!" He will then remove, say a couple of rows of maize grains for himself, south to the interval of the corner, or "Let me make Zambo" (Zambo is a sharpish bend on the south), or "Let me make the snail's spiral" when two solitary grains are left, surrounded by a single ring of other grains, as the girl's portion.

Children are taught a little saying about their fingers which reminds one of the "This little pig went to market" of one's infancy. Starting with the little finger, they say:

"*Zikolo kanguzinho kanguzinho*"
"This little one (is) the one which cannot draw water"

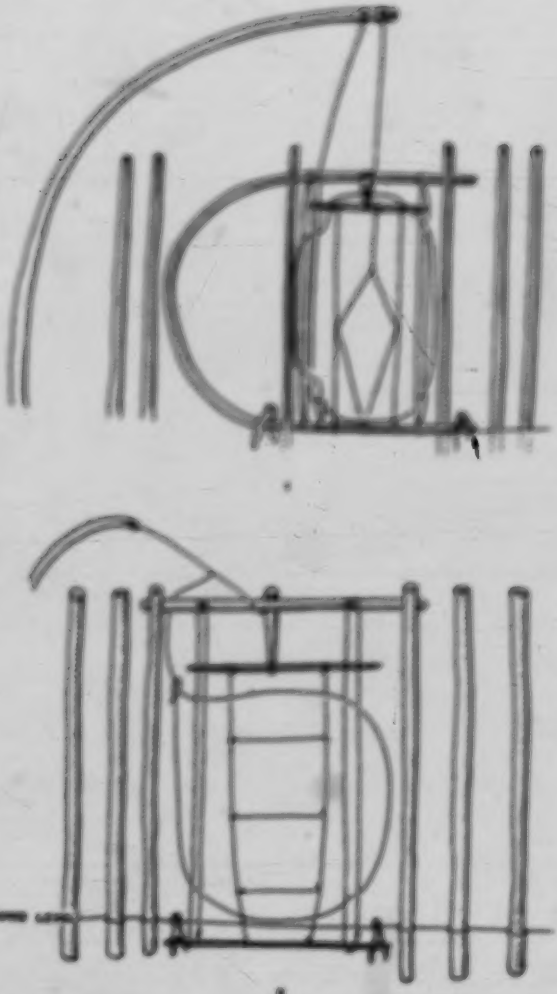
Pointing to the ring finger,

"*Kandukanguo ajangamuka*"
"This little one's brother (is) the one that picks the nuts"

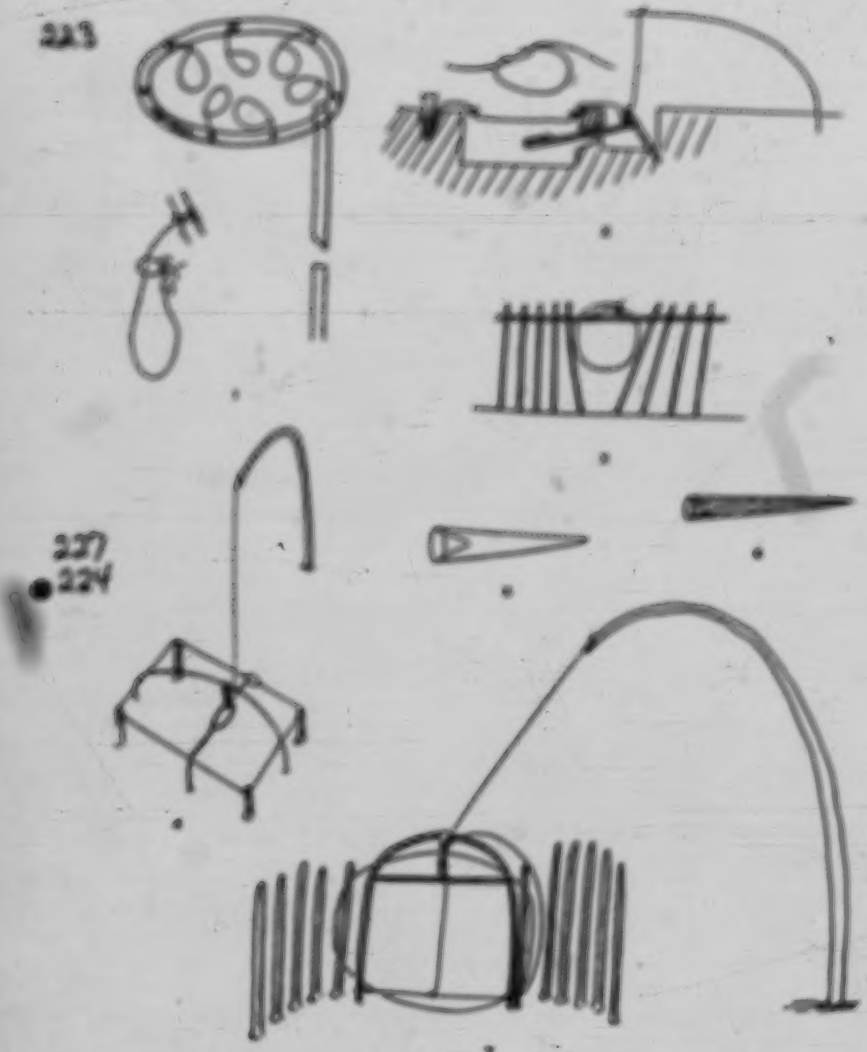
To the middle finger,

"*Ajangamuka amuda amuda*"
"(The brother of) the one that picks the nuts (is) the one who fetches wood"

●224



[End Plate 19]



[End Plate 20]

● 224

223
224
227

1, 2, 3, Traps for rats and mice; 4, 4, Bird traps; 6, 7, Fish traps; 8, Trap for guinea fowl.

[End Plate 21]

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7 Marovi FR4

in beaten with branches, or leaves are thrown at him. Men join from all the villages. Next day they set out in line towards the nets they have set, the inaugurator of the hunt in the middle. Game is driven into the nets by the advancing line of men and their dogs and is speared. On the other side of the nets are men set as watchers, who would let down the net at the approach of any big antelope, who would otherwise break it. All the game killed is taken back to the boy clad in the leaves, who watches it in the background. At the end of the hunt (*saimba*) the inaugurator of the hunt chooses his portion after it has all been divided up, and gets a hind leg of every beast killed by the others. The net used is 200 to 400 yards long. Hunting is done in the early morning during the month of July.

The Maŋanja and Chipeta did not hunt elephant, but dug game pits. They used bows and arrows. The Yao, Machinga and Amangoche, possessing guns in the old days, used to make big hunting parties, staying away two and three months and killing elephant and other game. The hunter inaugurating the hunt had the first shot at an elephant, and all ivory was his till sold at the coast, when the followers got their proportion of calico brought back. The skins and horns were divided. The flesh was cut into strips and dried over wood fires. The chief has choice of the biggest tusk on the return of the party to the village. Yao elephant were shot in the vicinity of the village, the chief claimed the ground tusk, *i.e.*, the tusk on the side on which the elephant dropped. Before starting on such a hunt the *sis* would be cast to see that they would have good luck. All those taking part would have "medicine" rubbed into little incisions cut on arms, shoulders, and sometimes on body. *Mankwala* (medicine) was also tied on the guns; it consisted sometimes of a number of pieces of wood threaded on a string, or I have seen another made of sun-dried animals' blood and charcoal. Should the wife of anyone of the expedition commit adultery her husband might get killed. A man going to hunt will never have intercourse with his wife the night before, otherwise he would be unsuccessful.

Bows and arrows are used, the bows being sometimes about 5 to 6 feet long. The "Mediterranean release" is employed, and the arrow rests against the left side of the bow. Three kinds of arrows are carried in the same quiver (*pofo*): *nyandwa*, a blunt arrow for stunning birds; *nchato*, with a large iron blade; and *mpoliso*, with a small poisoned head.

The Maŋanja use a long-handled, short-bladed spear, usually thrown at a short distance (a few yards), when it is grasped in the hand about the middle. From a further distance (thirty yards) it may be pitched by holding at the extreme end. Traps of various kinds, made of a bent sapling and noose, are commonly used. Dogs are used in hunting to drive, to run down small game and to keep the bigger animals at bay. The only arrow poison used is *chisola*, made from euphorbia juice and other things; it is used in warfare and elephant hunting. The flesh of animals killed with *chisola* is not considered safe to eat. Children from twelve years of age accompany their fathers hunting.

[P. 142B] FT7 Yao FT7

II. The Political Structure
BEFORE THE WHITES CAME

173 643 167 (*kukamula kukongolo*), i.e. to surrender to the chief in the area. Also the chief sent out expeditions to capture slaves or he purchased slaves with the cloth and beads he had exchanged for ivory at the East coast.

643 421 Within his territory certain privileges and rights were held by the chief and he had certain religious duties to perform in which the unity of the people in the territory was expressed. In general the chief had rights over any ivory either found or hunted in his territory. If a dead elephant were found the tusks belonged to the chief, though he usually rewarded the finder with cloth. If a man killed an elephant the tusk that lay on [224] the ground belonged to the chief while the other belonged to the killer. The killer's tusk was in- [439] cluded in the chief's caravan to the coast and its value paid in cloth to the killer when the caravan returned.

643 657 The chief was also entitled to an annual tribute of food and beer from all villages in his area, but this was used to entertain visitors who came to the court-village.

643 782 The chief's religious duties lay mainly in propitiating the spirits of his ancestors on occasions when the community at large, in contrast to the chief's own private affairs, was either threatened or directly affected. The most obvious occasion was immediately before the rains came when flour was poured on the tree shrine and the spirits of the ancestors asked for good rains. Later when the rains were over a similar sacrifice was made asking for a good harvest. Sacrifices to the ancestors were also made on two other public occasions. They were made when some calamity had occurred or was believed to be impending. A run of unsuccessful campaigns induced Cingwalugwalu, a son of the Yao chief Mponda near Fort Johnston, to ask his father's father's brother to make sacri-